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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: JUNE 16, 2005 (1300 HOURS LOCAL) --
FOUR MEMBERS OF PALESTINIAN ISLAMIC JIHAD ARRESTED IN THE
WEST BANK, PALESTINIAN MILITANTS FIRE FIVE MORTAR SHELLS IN
THE GAZA STRIP

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

1. (SBU) Summary: In the West Bank, the IDF arrested four members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) June 15. Israeli settlers uprooted or set on fire 140 Palestinian-owned olive trees near Nablus-area settlements. In the Gaza Strip, IDF forces entered al-Mughragha overnight June 15-16 and arrested one Palestinian. Palestinian militants fired five mortar shells at IDF and settler targets in the Gaza Strip overnight June 15-16, but no injuries were reported. End Summary.

West Bank

2. (SBU) ATTACKS/SECURITY:

-- Deaths/Injuries: Nil.

-- Arrests: Palestinian media sources reported that the IDF on June 15 arrested three members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Bani Zayd village, north of Ramallah, while another PIJ member was arrested at a roadblock in the same area.

-- Security Incidents: According to Palestinian sources, Israeli settlers uprooted 40 olive trees near the village of Qaryout, south of Nablus, June 15.

-- Security Incidents: According to Palestinian sources, Israeli settlers set on fire about 100 olive trees near the village of Kufr Qalil, near Nablus, June 15.

3. (SBU) DEMOLITIONS/CONFISCATIONS:

-- According to Israeli and Palestinian reports, Jerusalem municipality bulldozers demolished two Arab homes in the East Jerusalem neighborhoods of Al-Tur and Abu Tur June 15. According to the municipality, the buildings were constructed without permits.

4. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

-- Palestinian media reported that an IDF commander in charge of the Ramallah area, Col. Miki Idestein, announced that East Jerusalem residents would be allowed to enter Ramallah and any Area 'A' city in the West Bank without permits. The commander's statements were reportedly made to refute rumors that Israeli blue ID holders will be forced to apply for permits in order to move to and from Ramallah, effective at the end of July. The IDF commander also reportedly said that four terminals for vehicles and seven for pedestrians to check West Bank residents entering Jerusalem would be open by August. The checkpoints at Atarot and Al-Ram would be removed by the end of August, once the Qalandiya terminal is completed, according to the media report.

Gaza

5. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death: Nil.

-- Injury: Nil.

-- Mortars/Rockets/Shootings: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants fired a total of five mortar shells in four separate attacks on IDF and Israeli settler targets in the Gaza Strip overnight June 15-16.

6. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- UNRWA reported that IDF forces entered al-Mughragha overnight June 15-16 and arrested one Palestinian.

17. (SBU) PALESTINIAN SECURITY FORCES:

-- Palestinian sources reported that Gaza IDF commander BG Kochavi met with Gaza NSF commander Sulayman Hillas June 15 in Gaza. The two discussed the increase in mortar and rocket attacks and agreed to enhance cooperation at the field commanders, level, according to Palestinian sources.

18. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open June 16, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction.

-- Erez Crossing was open June 15 and 3,376 laborers and 324 merchants crossed into Israel.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was open June 15, and 324 laborers entered.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinians June 16, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was open June 16.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for arrivals and departures June 16.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed June 16. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi, except males aged 16-30.

19. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- UNRWA reported that Fatah supporters demonstrated the evening of June 15 in Khan Yunis in protest against the reported desecration of the Koran in an Israeli prison.
PEARCE